



# FEMA

## *Illinois County Applauds Buyouts*

**Sangamon County, IL** – In May 2002, major flooding occurred in the county when the South Fork of the Sangamon River reached the highest level in a 50-year period and the Sangamon River exceeding the 100-year flood elevation. It was then that the county decided to stand firm in the use of acquisitions (buyouts) as a means of protecting its citizens from the effects of flooding.

Linda Wheeland, Senior Planner with the Springfield Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission, recalls the county's participation in the State of Illinois' Buyout Program.

"At that time [alluding to the Great Flood of 1993], we had an area in the county that had been a fishing camp, probably for about 100 years. Over those years people had built cabins or placed mobile homes on the property," recalled Wheeland. "The property, known as Driftwood Acres, is located at the confluence of the South Fork of the Sangamon River and Sugar Creek. In July 1993 and again in the spring of 1994, it was completely inundated [with water]. People couldn't get in or out."

Driftwood Acres was a 55-acre parcel located entirely in the floodplain and had been used as a river camp since the late 1800s with over 40 structures. The structures and their contents were often damaged by floodwaters, access to the area was cut off, and contamination of the water occurred. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) offered a solution to use Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds to execute a buyout of the floodprone property.

"The property was owned by one individual. We didn't meet with any resistance from him as far as participation in the buyout program. He knew that it was voluntary," said Wheeland. "He lived in Texas. He had inherited the property and just allowed people who were living on it to remain there."

Preliminary approval for the project was granted in March 1996. Closeout of the project was February 1999. The total project cost was \$92,485.76. All of the structures were removed, the concrete road was excavated, and the area has returned to a natural state. The county plans to develop a wetlands-banking project on the property to offset the impact of a planned highway-construction project.



**Sangamon County,  
Illinois**



### **Quick Facts**

Year:

**1993**

Sector:

**Public**

Cost:

**\$373,362.00 (Actual)**

Primary Activity/Project:

**Acquisition/Buyouts**

Primary Funding:

**Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**